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IMPOSSIBLE WITH MEN POSSIBLE WITH GOD.

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NEW YEAR'S EVE, 1892, in the town of Calais. In a modest Mission Hall in the Boulevard de Lesseps, some thirty people were gathered to spend the last hour of the Old Year in praise and prayer. M. and Mme. Brun, who have so long been labouring in this town, little thought that the first Watch-Night Service they had held was to be memorable in the life of one, at least, among them.

As the little meeting was in progress, a man came quietly in and was shown to a seat by Mme. Brun. To outward appearance he was miserable enough, but within, his heart was filled with a sullen rage, the very bitterness of sin, and he was so incensed against what he heard that he could hardly restrain himself from seizing a chair and trying to knock the speaker down! But the words spoken seemed to soothe him, and he sat still, listening eagerly, till the meeting closed, and then slipped away. It was his first visit to that hall, but for him the New Year just dawning was to bring, indeed, new experiences.

McAll Mission Booklets, No. 10.

Who was this poor fellow? According to his own confession,

"THE GREATEST ANARCHIST IN THE WORLD."

According to the testimony of the police and of the people of the neighbourhood where he lived, the most incorrigible drunkard, and one altogether past saving. S. had been four times in prison. He had fought with the police, and was known as a most violent character. A clever workman, being brought up as a lace-maker, or "tullist," he could make as much as four pounds a-week, when steady. His wife was a dressmaker, so that between them they could have lived in a most comfortable way.

But the power of evil had obtained possession of them, and strong drink held them in its fatal grip. So bad was the state of things in that family that the authorities took away the younger children from their parents, and placed them in homes where they could not trace them. The scene when the children were forcibly taken was fearful. Seven policemen were there to overcome the resistance, and the poor mother, taking the baby of a few months in her arms, would not surrender it, and squeezed it so tightly that she

broke its little ribs, so that the poor little child died a few days after. The mother would wander day and night in the villages and towns near by, searching for her children that had to be hidden from her to preserve their lives.

It was a rapid descent that they made in the way of perdition.

In fear of her life, the poor woman would go and beg for bread in the streets, and when Saturday evening came, and she heard her husband coming back, all his wages gone, and he furious with drink, she would have to take her children in her gown and flee to hide in some corner for the night, so that the husband and father might not find them.

When our story opens the family consisted of the father and mother, one son of about nineteen, at home, the three children hidden, and a little infant, the child of a daughter who had died. The son had come to the meetings before, and had for a time taken the temperance pledge, and it was through him that the father was induced to go to the Watch-night Service. For four days S. had lived on raw turnips stolen from the fields. On the fourth day he made a violent effort, and worked for hours discharging sacks of flour from a vessel.

Could any case seem more hopeless than this? Mind and body were ruined by sin, and for him there seemed indeed nothing but an untimely end. So great was the power of strong drink that on one occasion, having worked for some days, he spent two pounds or more in buying furniture wherewith to garnish his miserable room; but having a little money still left, he entered a cabaret, and, returning mad with drink, he proceeded to smash up and throw into the street everything he had purchased!

But the mercy of God was yet to be manifested towards him. He began to attend the meetings, and signed the pledge. Finding the great change that abstinence effected on his bodily health, he took courage, and hope entered into his soul. There was, then, a chance for him that he might one day be able again to lift up his head and gain the respect of his fellows. His sight became clearer, and he could once again take his place as a skilled workman at the loom. The change wrought in him could not be hid.

"IT IS ALL SO CHANGED NOW,"

said the poor wife. "Formerly it was shouting

and swearing all day long; now one does not dare to speak above a whisper. '*C'est une rude affaire.*'" Pointing to a bottle, she said, "Yes, that is the bottle that held the *genièvre* (gin). You see now it serves for the salad oil. Before, we could not afford such luxury." Another time she said to Mme. B., "We have all we need now, for we both work and earn plenty. And we find there are so many poor about who need help. We can give them a little soup, or a little bread, or a few *sous* to enable them to live." This from the poor woman who not long before was begging on the highway for bread for her children!

The man himself is witnessing a good confession before his comrades. He has often much to bear for his total abstinence principles, but he stands firm. "You may laugh at me for being a water drinker, but I am a drinker of happiness." Lately he has given up a good position because he would not work on Sunday. He has found another, but with a considerable diminution of pay. He found he was being deprived of his Sunday morning attendance at a place of worship, and was being brought under evil influences, so he at once made the sacrifice.

One day he said he saw a man pick up a

piece of silver of the value of fivepence. "That is not yours," said S. "Yes, it is; I have just found it." "No, it belongs to the publican, for you will go straight to the cabaret and spend it in drink." Speaking in a little meeting, he said, "People complain that trade is bad. It is all our fault. To-day I have been emptying the shops." (Mme. Brun had been that day admiring a large quantity of clothing he had been purchasing as presents for his wife and children, as well as for himself.) "If all had done as I have to-day, trade would soon be prosperous. But instead, you spend your money on poison, which makes you ill, and you lose your day's work." "Yes, that is true," said the listeners. "You serve the devil, and you take your beef-steaks to the publican." "But you were not always like this?" "No, alas, for if I had been I should be a rich man by this time, as you all know. They may laugh at me for going to the meetings, and say that I go there to get clothes. It is quite true, the meetings do clothe me, for there I have found the Way of Salvation."

S. is very ignorant of the Word of God, for as yet he cannot read, but he is learning hard, being taught by a good Christian lady, and he

hopes that by Whitsuntide he will be able to read fluently. He needs much help, for he has many things to contend with. But his feet are on the Rock of Ages, and he has found the Saviour, who has put forth His great power to deliver him from his sin and misery.

In November last, S. and his wife applied to the authorities to be reinstated in their rights as citizens, and to have their children again under their care. The pastor of the town of Douai, where the magistrates sat, was allowed to be present at the session, a great exception being made in his favour. He gave the account of the whole case, and the magistrates were greatly interested. They were much surprised to see them looking so respectably dressed. After a long interview, and after being very seriously warned of the great harm they had done, their appeal was granted, and last February the children were restored to them. So the family is now complete, and the poor parents are reaping the result of their blessed change, walking before God in honesty and sobriety, and seeking to serve Him.

As may be supposed, this extraordinary transformation has made a deep impression in the place. The police say they cannot

understand it, but they see for themselves the reality of it. Thus the Lord has given His servants at Calais this great encouragement and this seal to their ministry for Him. These striking conversions, and marked answers to prayer in the reclamation of the slaves of strong drink, seem to have been graciously given as encouragements to those who are now endeavouring to stem the tide of drunkenness which is threatening to overwhelm the land. In the little booklets entitled "Much Forgiven" and "Worth Saving," we have given other instances of the salvation of those who were far gone in sin and wretchedness. We desire to stir up prayer for this work in France, that the Lord will give His people increasing power in their testimony, and make them strong in faith, realising that now and always the Gospel is most surely "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Copies, price 4d. per dozen, post free, may be obtained from Colonel FINCH WHITE, 112 St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.; and from Miss COUSIN, 11 Greenhill Terrace, Edinburgh.

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